Dancing Star

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INFORMAL PUBLICATION DEVOTED TO THE ART OF DANCING

Editorial . . .

SHOULD A TEACHER RECEIVE CREDIT?

It is quite understandable that a man or woman learning to Ballroom dance would not want it generally known.

However, it is quite another matter when a student, who is studying dancing as a career, refuses to make known his teacher's name. This type of pupil likes to give the impression that he or she was born dancing and that his routines are all his own creation.

Fortunately for the dance profession these students are in a minority. Nevertheless, for a conscientious teacher to encounter such pupils is indeed an upsetting experience.

This particular breed of dance pupil seems to measure his instructor's worth as he would the purchase of a loaf of bread or a pair of socks. His attitude seems to be: "I've paid for my lessons and it's nobody's business where I learned."

In a sense, perhaps he is right. On the other hand, no teacher worth his or her salt has ever held the attitude that because he has been compensated for an hour's teaching he has no further interest in his students. It goes without saying that a competent dance teacher, like any true artist, always manages to give more both physically and mentally than he is compensated for.

As in the case of advanced students, an instructor can often be instrumental in furthering their careers by rendering such information as: what wardrobe and music are best suited to a particular dance, where and how to apply for professional bookings and what fee to expect, etc.

As in most lines of endeavor the road ahead is a bumpy one. Oftimes a teacher can help temper his pupil's heartaches with moral and spiritual support.

Obviously, when a student begins to earn a name for himself his teacher will be justly proud of him.

Most of the big names in the dance world give their former instructors their just due as any biographical sketch of the dancer will show.

A few years back I had the privilege of M.C'ing a show in which Eleanor Powell was the guest star. In her curtain speech she unhesitatingly gave the late Jack Donahue credit for her early dance training.

To attain the maximum from dance instruction there must be complete harmony between pupil and teacher. For this reason a person should not study with any teacher until he has satisfied himself as to that teacher's abilities.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Marc Platt and Betty George from a scene in "Kiss Me, Kate".

★ DANCING STAR ★
376 Almaden Ave. CY 5-7827
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Dance Lines

by Gordon Keith

SPEAKING OF THE CHARLESTON

HOW many of you remember when a little redhead by the name of Ginger Rogers first came intc prominence by winning a Charleston contest in Ft. Worth, Texas? Her one remaining contestant in the finals was Billy Daniel, now a well known director of dance pictures.

THE Charleston seems to be having a tough struggle for "revival" out here in Northern California. However, in the Southern part of the state where it first made its come back, the dance is still going strong.

IT was at the Mocambo with the Firehouse Five Plus Two that it all started. Someone suggested to the Club's bosses that it might help business to hold a Charleston contest. After much pro and con discussion it was finally agreed to allot Monday night to the project. Inasmuch as Monday is a stinkeroo in the night club business anyway, what could they lose? The contest went on. The rest is history. Mondays turned out to be as busy as Saturdays with the cash customers lined up to get a table.

Even our good friend Charley Baker of DANCER'S INTERNATIONAL and his wife walked away with first prize despite such competitors as Betty Hutton and Milton Berle...

WHY DANCE?

ARE there psychological reasons for dancing? asks Albert Edward Wiggam D.Sc., in his EXPLORE YOUR MIND column. His answer is:

YES. It is probably the best, widest, most pleasant highway to health and happiness a man has ever invented. Instances have been reported of men and women being restored to health by dancing. A nation-wide survey of 80 psychologists showed that dancing is the best way known to improve personality. You can't worry and dance, or dance and worry.

HE FOOLED THE DOCTORS

NEEDLESS to say, we are in full accord with this writer's findings. We too, have known many cases where dancing actually played an important part in helping to restore a person's health, not to mention happiness. We are personally acquainted with J.S.McCown, better known to the dance profession as "Mac", who, while in his late seventies was run down by a drunken driver. With an arm and leg broken, chest crushed, and spine injured, the doctors said he'd never live. But he did. Then they said he'd never walk again. Today at 83, Mac is not only walking, but dancing. Christmas, when we saw him, he stood on his head just to prove to us what fine condition he was in.

"Mac, we told him, "we'll be very happy if we're able to stand on our feet at 83, much less our head."

The gymnasium of running, walking on stilts, climbing, etc. steels and makes hardy single powers and muscles, but dancing, like a corporeal poesy, embellishes, exercises, and equalizes all the muscles at once.

-Richter-

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ARTHUR J. "DOC" CORBETT
PALO ALTO YACHT HARBOR

reviews

"Kiss Me, Kate"

Willy Shakespeare's "The Taming of the Shrew" has undergone a complete rejuvenation by the talented Spewacks, Sam and Bella. This Cole Porter musical, which is in reality, two plays in one, first had its inception as "Kiss Me, Kate" two years ago when it opened on Broadway amid loud approbation by critic and audience alike.

The National Company which is currently playing the West Coast has a talented cast which unquestionably upholds the high standards set by its predecessor. Inasmuch as ours is a dance publication and primarily concerned with choreography and dancers, suffice it to say that Robert Wright, Frances McCann, Betty George, Benny Baker and the rest all turned in admirable acting and singing performances.

Hanya Holm, who has done such a first rate job on the show's choreography, loomed into Broadway headlines when "Kiss Me, Kate" first opened in New York. Prior to that Miss Holm had earned an enviable reputation as a teacher, writer and ballet choreographer, but "Kiss Me Kate" was her first musical comedy hit.

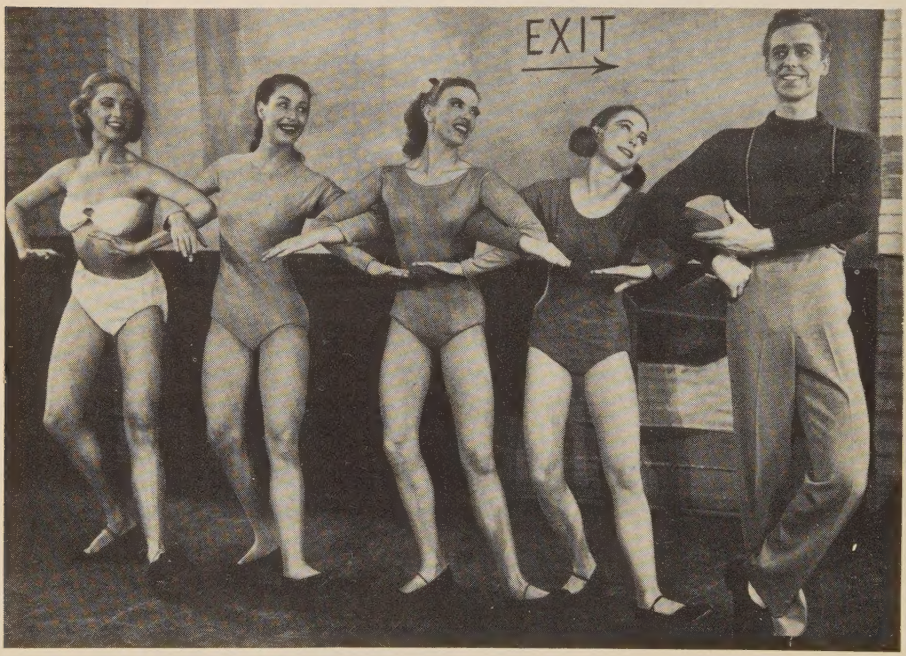
The dance ensembles for the most part, combinations of ballet-musical comedy, are decidedly invigorating and refreshing to watch.

Only one dance number failed to live up to this reviewer's expectations. The "Too Darn Hot" song and dance gymnastics of the colored trio, Cook, Johnson and Brown, although performed with verve and considerable showmanship, seemed to have too much in common with most other colored dance trios. (Apparently the audience felt differently for they accorded this act an excellent ovation.)

Last, but far from least, we come to Marc Platt whose superb dancing was easily one of the high-

(Continued on page 11)

Joan Djorup, Nikki Cellini, Doris Atkinson, Sandra Uzzell and Marc Platt, from a number in the "Kiss Me, Kate" musical.



An Open Letter To The

DANCE MASTERS OF AMERICA

Dancing Star
GORDON KEITH
★ EDITOR ★
376 ALMADEN AVE.
SAN JOSE 10, CALIF.

DANCE MASTERS OF AMERICA, INC.
1644 Connecticut Avenue
Washington 9, D.C.

Dear Sirs:

Perhaps you wonder why I have chosen to direct this 'Open Letter' to the Dance Masters of America. My answer is this:

Since 1938 I have been a member of the D.M.of A. and have always deemed it a privilege to belong. As a member I am well aware of the fine work this organization has been doing in its efforts to advance the art of dancing and improve the practice of teaching. I know too, that the D.M.of A. has worked diligently to establish better and more uniform methods of instruction among teachers of dancing in the United States and Canada. I know this, as do the other members, but does the public at large know it? I say emphatically, no!

Is not dancing as old as life itself? Why, then, should not Mr. and Mrs. Average Citizen become acquainted with an organization that stands for the highest in business and professional ethics of the dance world?

And why should it be necessary for a teacher to have to sell a potential dance pupil on the merits of the D.M.of A.? Shouldn't it be the other way around? A prospective student should, of his own volition, choose a school displaying the D.M.of A. ensignia because he is familiar with the high caliber instruction available from its members.

Although the Dance Masters of America had its inception back in 1884 when it was known as the AMERICAN NATIONAL ASSOCIATION, MASTERS OF DANCING, it is still unknown to the layman.

Associations such as the D.M.of A. have remained too long in their own little world. And because of this lethargy or lack of foresight, the public has come to look upon one individual as the 'Supreme' authority on Ballroom dancing in America today.

An Informal Publication Devoted To The Art Of Dancing

(Continued on page 10)

American Ballets, Ballerinas Among World's Finest

Eileen Darby—Graphic House
MARIA TALLCHIEF

Despite the fact that the United States has no State subsidized ballet schools as does England, to mention but one other country, it is generally conceded by dancers, critics and balletomanes alike, that American ballet has at last come into its own.

Topflight classical ballerinas such as Maria Tallchief, daughter of a full-blooded Osage Indian, who just recently closed a most successfull season with the New York City Ballet Company, have aided greatly in placing American ballets and ballerinas neck and neck with Europe's finest.

Already, Oklahoma-born Maria Tallchief's flawless performance in "Firebird" is considered to be one of the best in today's ballet. Her other specialties such as the Balanchine-Bizet "Symphony in C", Divertimento" and her Pas de Deux from "Sylvia" have technique and quality of a truly great ballerina.

When she was five her mother, a Kansas farm girl, sent her to dancing school. At nine the family moved to Southern California so that she and her sister, Marjorie (at this writing, a principal dancer in the Marques de Cuevas Grand Ballet) could continue their dance training.

Maria's studies continued under Ernest Belcher, David Lichine and the sister of Vaslav Nijinski, Bronislava Nijinski. She soon became a favored dance pupil of the latter.

When she moved East in 1942 she joined the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. Choreographer George Balanchine noting her artistic abilities began casting her in his ballets and later, married her. (They have recently separated.)

Since her prima ballerina days with the City Center Company, 1948, under the superb polishing of the Russian-trained Balanchine, Maria's star has continued in its ascendancy.

As one of the Country's ranking classical ballerinas Maria Tallchief is as American as her name. With Maria, there are no backstage tantrums. She considers herself, and the troup, "just a group of young, everyday Americans who all get on."

Her main interest in life is dancing. ★ ★ ★

You Owe It To Your Child...

by Neal Stanton

The first few days in dancing school are much like the first days in public school. One of the main differences is that parents aren't allowed in classrooms while school is in session. On the other hand many teachers of dancing do allow parents to observe classes and some encourage it, particularly if the child is rather young.

At first many of the school's policies will be foreign to you. Although every teacher has his or her rules which students and parents are expected to adhere to, it is safe to state that basically, most dance schools follow a similar pattern of operation. Some require their pupils from the start to have a regulation school costume and professional style dance shoes or slippers. Whether or not your child's teacher expresses any definite preferences in the matter of accessories, you will be wise to consult him in such matters. In the long run such action can save you time and money. *(Continued on page 7)*

If your girl or boy is enrolled in a dance school that permits you to sit in on your child's lesson there are two important factors to bear in mind. (1) Keep pencil and paper handy so that you can jot down any pertinent information concerning material being taught. (2) Under no circumstances reprimand, or carry on a conversation with your offspring.

Even though your child's left foot is up when the others have their right up, keep your blood pressure down by remaining quiet. Do not be mislead into believing that because an instructor chooses to overlook certain mistakes that he isn't aware of them, or what is worse, that he just doesn't want to take time to correct them. He undoubtedly has his reasons for not making an issue of the matter.

An experienced dance teacher usually understands enough about child psychology to know that each youngster is an individual with a mind and temperament of his or her own. And in the matter of correction or disciplining each may react differently.

A child who has been raised more or less by himself is likely to be rather timid when first coming in contact with other children. He may even cry and refuse to take his place in line with the rest of the class. Should this happen with your own girl or boy, don't become angry and raise your voice. Most teachers, at one time or another, have experienced similar occurrences and if left to their own devices, are perfectly capable of handling such situations.

There have been occasions when a parent has had to "sit" through several lessons before a child could be persuaded to join the class. A parent should never give in to a youngster's whims by discontinuing the lessons. To do so is to admit defeat, not for the child, but for the parent.

One should never enter into any sort of training with the "I'll see if he likes it--if not he can always quit" attitude. Such thinking does more harm than good to a child.

Have an understanding between you and your child that once lessons are begun, he must at least complete the term. Anything short of this is decidedly unfair to both student and teacher.

Show your child that you take a personal interest in his dancing lessons. Don't make the mistake of sending him off to class and then forgetting about him. There is a great deal more to dancing than just paying for the lessons. There is if you want your offspring to attain the qualities he can, and should, from his dancing. Set aside a definite time each day for practice and be consistent about it.

Should your child appear to be slower than some of the others in learning dance steps, don't worry over it. And don't make the mistake of comparing him with some other youngster in the class who may learn a bit faster. Such comparisons often tend to discourage a child and can cause him to take a definite dislike to his dancing.

A good thing to remember is to compliment before you criticize. Find something he does well and tell him about it, then when you call his attention to his mistakes he won't feel so badly.

Whether you give your girl or boy dancing lessons for a social or theatrical background is unimportant. The main thing is that you are affording your child an opportunity to acquire, through dancing a healthy, vigorous body, replete with poise and grace. And too, you are helping to insure his popularity, for any girl or boy capable of entertaining others need never worry about being left out of social functions.

As a parent who takes her offspring's dance training to heart, you will feel a certain pride in watching his or her progress. You will discover a real thrill in his first costume, his first solo dance and the first recital. These are but a few of the happy times that loom ahead for both the parent and child, who work together in making the study of dancing the real enjoyment it truly is.

As a closing thought, it may not be amiss to remind you that teachers, like parents and students, are only human. For this reason if

(concluded on page 11)

SOCIAL SECURITY

If you would increase your social status, you can do no better than to increase your knowledge of dancing.

Nothing is more boring to a lady than a partner who keeps dancing the same step over and over regardless of the type of music being played.

Take a few minutes a week and practice a new dance step or two. It will pay you great social dividends...

-3- Waltz Steps

TRAVEL HESITATION: (Closed position)

Left step forward, (count, 1)
Right point forward, leg extended, foot off floor, (count, 2-3)

Right step forward, (count, 4)
Left point forward, leg extended, foot off floor, (count, 5-6)

Repeat entire step making (12) counts in all.

CRADLE HESITATION

CRADLE HESITATION: (Closed position)

Left step forward, (count, 1)
Right point forward, leg extended, foot off floor, (count, 2-3)

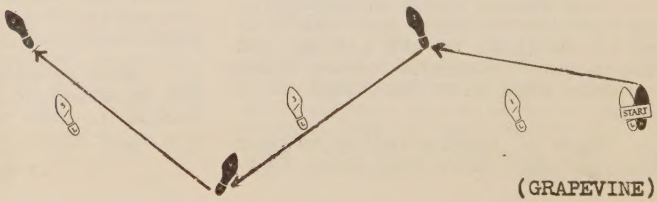
Right step back, (count, 4)
Left point back, leg extended, foot off floor, (count, 5-6)

Repeat entire step making (12) counts in all.

GRAPEVINE: (Closed position with man's left side toward line of direction.)

Left step to side, (count, 1)
Right cross front of left, (count, 2)
Left step to side, (count, 3)
Right cross back of left, (count, 4)
Left step to side, (count, 5)
Right cross front of left, (count, 6)

NOTE: An easy method of getting into the GRAPEVINE STEP is to do a left and right BASIC WALTZ step and on the right BASIC WALTZ turn your partner clockwise, ¼ turn. You should now be facing with your left side (man's left side) toward line of direction.



(GRAPEVINE)

biographical brief

MARC PLATT

Marc Platt, whose full name is, Marcel Le Plat, was born in Pasadena, California and educated in Seattle, Washington. He studiedat the Cornish School in Seattle and later went into stock with the Henry Duffy Players.

After auditioning for Leonid Massine, Marc was engaged to dance with Colonel de Basil's Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo.For three years he toured the United States and Europe with the company.

It was in 1938 that Marc Platt went with the original Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo as their first dancer and for them he choreographed "Ghost Town", the first all American ballet.

Two years later Platt left ballet for the legitimate theatre going into "The Lady Comes Across", with actress-dancer, Jessie Matthews. This play folded after two days on Broadway. His next venture was in "My Dear Public, " which starred Mitzi Green. This one closed in Philadelphia before it had a chance to reach Broadway. With the George Abbott show,"Beat the Band", Marc faired somewhat better for this one lasted eight weeks.

Then came "Oklahoma" in which he danced the dream ballet opposite Katherine Sergava in the original company. He remained with this musical for one year. Finally the movies spotted him and he got a call to appear with Aly Khan's wife in "Tonight and Every Night". This was followed by "Tars and Spars" and "The Swordsman." Last year, in Rome, Marc made "Eternal Melody" with Jan Kiepura and Martha Eggerth.

In a recent radio interview by Jane Todd, Marc Platt said regarding aspiring dancers:

"Today it is not enough to be a good dancer, one must be able to sing and act as well."

When asked what type of dancing they should study Marc said:

"A good variety of dancing is needed in today's highly competetive show business."

About his future plans he said that he intended to return to San Francisco to go into a business that was a far cry from show business. (What it was, he didn't say)

This will undoubtedly come as a saddening blow to Marc Platt's many dance fans.

North Meets South For One Day Normal

The One Day Normal held by the Southern California Association of Dance Teachers at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel, February 11th was a real success. Over 100 members were in attendance.

Genial Tom Sheehy's MC'ing aided in putting everyone at ease.A well rounded faculty included the following dance teachers: Bill Pillich, tap; Marjorie La Belle, Cecchetti ballet; Aggie Auld, Hawaiian; Walton Biggerstaff, character; Dorothy Lyndall, children's work, and Gloria and Howard, ballroom.

Clyde Queen, a student of Olga Ziceva, demonstrated and danced the latter's arrangement of'Aurora's Variation' from Tschaikowsky's 'Sleeping Beauty'.

New members were introduced and obligated by Gladys Bowen, president of the Southern Association , during a luncheon given by the organization.

Following the Normal Session, Mr. and Mrs. Bowen were hosts at an informal reception for their many dance friends.

Among the members of the D.M.C. who flew down to attend the One Day Normal were, Lodena Edgcumbe , Olga Ziceva and Clyde Queen.

If you enjoyed reading this INFORMATIVE little DANCE PUBLICATION, why not mail in a subscription for yourself or a friend?

You'll find a SUBSCRIPTION BLANK on page eleven. $1.25 a year.

-WATCH US GROW-

Dancing Star

IT'S A FACT . . .

The Barn dance is of American origin. Its popularity was toward the end of the 19th century when it was the custom for farmers who needed a new barn to invite their neighbors over for a "working".

The job was usually completed in short order after which, a dance was thrown. In certain rural sections this type of dance is still popular. But today's barn dances are not always held in new or empty barns.

* * *

In England it is the custom at a palais de danse (dance hall) for professional dancers to hire out at so much a dance. Inasmuch as women greatly outnumber men at the dances such work is obviously more profitable to men.

Nor are these dancers considered gigolos in any sense of the word. It is strictly an honorable business, indulged in by professional dancers as a means of supplementing their income.

* * *

Victor Silvester, chairman of the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing, Inc., of England once said, "The smarter the ballroom, the worse the dancing." * * *

(Open Letter, cont'd from p.5)

-2- OPEN LETTER TO THE DANCE MASTERS OF AMERICA, INC.)

Should you doubt this, a glance at the Encyclopaedia Britannica or the Encyclopedia Americana will bear me out.

It has always been my personal contention that the Art of Dancing can best be served by a group of qualified dance authorities rather than by any one person, who, through continuous advertising has managed to make his name a household word.

It is not the purpose of this OPEN LETTER to pick the bones of any individual, or group, rather, it is my sincere desire to help awaken such a potentially powerful organization as the DANCE MASTERS OF AMERICA, INC., into taking the initiative in educating the American public to the fact that advertising, however voluminous, is not in itself a guarantee of superior dance instruction.

If advertising can create the illusion of authority for one person in the eyes of millions, certainly this same medium might well serve to enlighten the dance minded public of the high qualities of such an organization as the D.M.of A. If intelligently publicized, the name DANCE MASTERS OF AMERICA could literally become synonymous with the word DANCE. Then and only then, will it have the commercial as well as artistic value for it's teacher-members.

Mr. and Mrs. Average Citizen should be told and retold what high standards govern the D.M.of A., and what it means to study dancing under such recognized teachers as those associated with the D.M. of A. They should be repeatedly reminded that to accept dance instruction from anyone less than a D.M.of A. graduate is to accept less than the best.

Money? Certainly it takes money. But if a well formulated plan for National advertising designed to reach the public at large, were presented to members of the D.M.of A., it is this writer's guess that they would be unanimous in voting for a fair assessment in order that such a plan might be carried out.

Trusting that this OPEN LETTER might be a forerunner to the day when the name DANCE MASTERS OF AMERICA, INC., will come to mean to the layman what it does to hundreds of its teacher-members, I beg to remain,

Very truly yours,

Gordon Keith

GK/bh

"Kiss Me, Kate"

lights of the show. Although Marc has an important acting and dancing part (not to mention vocal) we felt that the Spewacks who took the liberties they did with Willy Shakespeare, and rightly, too, might easily have gone a step further and written an even stronger part for Marc's character "Bill Calhoun". As long as we are on the subject, we should like to venture the suggestion that the Holm choreography might well have afforded the dexterous Marc Platt greater leeway with his dancing feet.

-G.K.-

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laugh lines

HE: Would you believe it? I never had a dancing lesson in my life.
SHE: I certainly would.

* * *

HE: Can I have this dance?
SHE: Sure. If you can find some one to dance with.

* * *

HE: Boy! I could dance like this all night.
SHE: Yeah, but would they allow it?

* * *

HE: I learned how to dance in one hour.
SHE: OH, so that's what's the matter.

* * *

HE: It's a funny thing, but every time I dance with you the dances seem so short.
SHE: They are. My fiance is the orchestra leader.

* * *

(*Continued from page 7*)

at any time during the course of your youngster's dance training you should become dissatisfied for any reason, do not make the mistake of dropping out of the school without first discussing your grievances with the teacher. He will appreciate your fairness in affording him an opportunity to present his side of the issue. END

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WHY NOT SEND A FRIEND A GIFT SUBSCRIPTION $1.25 YEARLY

Ballroom Patter

by David Storm

THE DANCE PARTNER TO AVOID

The Ballroom floor, like the highway, has its quota of violators of good etiquette. It seems that no matter where one goes for an evening's dancing he is certain to encounter at least one "floor-hog".

Floor-hogs, like their counter part, the road-hogs, are quickly detected by the flagrant disregard for those about them. Line of Direction on the ballroom floor seems to be an unheard of rule among them. Should they suddenly decide to dart across the center of the floor, or reverse direction, they do so with out the slightest warning to those nearby.

Obviously, a lady attached to one of these dance floor pests has little or no voice in the matter. Inasmuch as it is the lady's place to follow, the best she can do under the circumstances is to hang on until the end of that particular dance. And if she is smart she will certainly decline any further invitations from such partners.

Oddly enough, a person's behavior on the ballroom floor often reflects his true temperament and personality. A dancer who is considerate of other couples, not to mention the well-being of his own partner, is generally equally considerate in other matters. While a show-off and discourteous dancer is likely to be equally obnoxious elsewhere.

dance tips

In almost all dance steps the man begins with his left foot, the lady with her right.

Ladies, if you find it difficult to get your partner's lead, try putting a bit of tension into your left arm as it rests on his shoulder.

Ladies, should you find yourself getting off balance when your partner starts a One Step, try leaning slightly forward with your weight on the ball of your foot.

Gentlemen, before going from any step into a One-Step, give your partner an adequate lead by firmly pushing her backward so that you do not walk up on her toes.

* * * * * * * * * * * *

Dancing as an art, we may be sure, cannot die out, but will always be undergoing a rebirth.

-Havelock Ellis-

Dancing Star

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